2. (amended) The method [for removing contaminants from a processing bath for processing semiconductor wafers] according to claim 1, wherein said semiconductor processing bath is an etching bath.

3. (amended) The method [for removing contaminants from a processing bath for processing semiconductor wafers] according to claim 1, wherein said semiconductor processing bath is a cleaning bath.

4. (amended) The method [for removing contaminants from a processing bath for processing semiconductor wafers] according to claim 1, wherein said contaminants are removed from the air/liquid interface of said [the] semiconductor processing bath.

5. (amended) The method [for removing contaminants from a processing bath for processing semiconductor wafers] according to claim 4, wherein said [wherein said] semiconductor processing bath is an etching bath.

6. (amended) The method [for removing contaminants from a processing bath for processing semiconductor wafers] according to claim 5, wherein said [wherein said] contaminants include silica.

7. (amended) A method for reducing the contamination on a semiconductor wafer from a wet etching bath comprising:

processing said semiconductor wafer in said wet etching bath containing an etching fluid;

subsequently rapidly removing an upper portion of said [the] etching fluid from said wet etching bath to remove contaminants from the surface of said wet etching bath while retaining said semiconductor wafer in said wet etching bath; and[,]

subsequently removing said semiconductor wafer from said wet etching bath.

8. (amended) The method [for reducing the contamination on a semiconductor wafer from a wet etching bath] according to claim 7, wherein a substantial portion of said etching fluid is removed.

9. (amended) The method [for reducing the contamination on a semiconductor wafer from a wet etching bath] according to claim 8, wherein said upper portion of said etching fluid is removed by draining a top portion of said etching fluid from said wet etching bath.

10. (amended) The method [for reducing the contamination on a semiconductor wafer from a wet etching bath] according to claim 9, wherein said upper portion of said etching fluid is removed by a paddle from the top of said wet etching bath.

11. (amended) The method [for reducing the contamination on a semiconductor wafer from a wet etching bath] according to claim 9, wherein said upper portion of said etching fluid is removed by opening a valve in said wet etching bath.

12. (amended) The method [for reducing the contamination on a semiconductor wafer from a wet etching bath] according to claim 9, wherein said upper portion of said etching fluid is removed by hingedly releasing a door located at an upper portion of said wet etching bath.

13. (amended) The method [for reducing the contamination on a semiconductor wafer from a wet etching bath] according to claim 9, wherein said upper portion of said etching fluid is removed by sliding a door located at an upper portion of said wet etching bath.

14. (amended) The method [for reducing the contamination on a semiconductor wafer from a wet etching bath] according to claim 9, wherein said upper portion of said etching fluid is removed by rapidly removing a wafer boat containing said semiconductor wafer from said wet etching bath.

15. (amended) The method [for reducing the contamination on a semiconductor wafer from a wet etching bath] according to claim 9, wherein said upper portion of said etching fluid is removed by telescopically collapsing sidewalls of a vessel containing said wet etching bath.

16. (amended) The method [for reducing the contamination on a semiconductor wafer from a wet etching bath] according to claim 10, wherein said contaminants are removed from the air/liquid interface of said wet etching bath.

17. (amended) A method for etching a semiconductor wafer, said method comprising:

placing an etching fluid into a wet [an] etching vessel;

placing said semiconductor wafer in said etching fluid;

contacting said semiconductor wafer with said etching fluid for a predetermined time;

rapidly removing a portion of said etching fluid from the upper surface of said wet etching vessel while keeping said semiconductor wafer immersed in said etching fluid; and,

removing said semiconductor wafer from said etching fluid.

20. (amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein said etching fluid is removed from an [the] upper surface of said wet etching vessel by draining a top portion of said etching fluid from said wet etching vessel.

21. (amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein said top [upper] portion of said etching fluid is removed by opening a valve in said wet etching vessel.

22. (amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein said top [upper] portion of said etching fluid is removed by hingedly releasing a door located at an upper portion of said wet etching vessel.

23. (amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein said top [upper] portion of said etching fluid is removed by sliding a door located at an upper portion of said wet etching vessel.

24. (amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein said top [upper] portion of said etching fluid is removed by rapidly removing a wafer boat containing said semiconductor wafers from said wet etching vessel.

25. (amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein said top [upper] portion of said etching fluid is removed by telescopically collapsing sidewalls of said wet etching vessel.

26. (amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein said etching fluid is removed from the upper surface of said wet etching vessel by physically removing a top portion of said etching fluid from said wet etching vessel.

27. (amended) The method according to claim 26, wherein said top [upper] portion of said etching fluid is removed from said wet etching vessel by a paddle.

44. (amended) A method for reducing the contaminants on a silicon wafer during a wet etching process, said method comprising:

immersing a wafer boat in an etching vessel having an etching fluid therein for a sufficient time to etch said silicon wafer; and

rapidly removing said wafer [semiconductor] boat from said etching vessel to remove contaminants residing on the upper surface of said etching fluid by causing said etching fluid to spill out of said vessel.